THE BEST HEALTHY CARROT CAKE EVER

Gluten free, dairy free, low glycemic, heart-healthy, single-servings

This is it... the best carrot cake ever! These cupcakes literally melt in your mouth. The crumb is tender and moist (thank you heart-healthy olive oil!) while the crunch from toasted walnuts wake up your senses. The perfect flavor zing happens when orange, cinnamon and nutmeg dance together with their buddies carrots and raisins. The ultimate triumph over all other carrot cakes is the topping: maple, coconut and cinnamon crunchy bits. I promise ... you won't miss the traditional cream cheese frosting!

Ingredients

1 and 1/2 cups chopped walnuts
Plus 24 raw whole walnuts for tops

Wet

1 and 1/2 cups coconut sugar
1 and 1/4 cups olive oil
4 large eggs
1/3 cup orange juice
Zest of one large orange

Dry

1 and 1/2 cups brown rice flour
3/4 cup oat flour
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
4 cups shredded carrots (about 5)
1 cup raisins, unsweetened
Toasted walnuts (from above)

Top

1 cup shredded coconut
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 tablespoon cinnamon

Makes 24 cupcakes

1. Preheat oven to 350ºF/180ºC. Prepare 24 cupcake tins with paper cupcake holders. Lightly toast chopped walnuts only until they start to slightly brown - about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

2. Combine wet ingredients: coconut sugar, olive oil, eggs, orange juice and zest in a bowl and beat with a hand mixer or stand mixer for 2 minutes until light and fluffy.

3. Combine dry ingredients: rice flour, oat flour, spices, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Stir until well blended. Fold in shredded carrots, raisins and toasted walnuts. Scoop the chunky batter into the cupcake holders.

4. Top: Combine coconut, maple syrup and cinnamon in a small bowl and stir. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon coconut topping onto each cupcake. Finally, add one raw walnut half. Press the walnut down a little to stick it into batter.

5. Bake cupcakes 20 to 22 minutes - until cakes are golden and a tester inserted in the center comes out mostly clean. Do not overbake. The cupcakes will continue to set up as they cool.

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